

CAREER FOCUS

Your Guide to Planned Success

**Top
Engineering
Challenges**

Career Clusters & Pathways

**Strategies
for
Networking**

**How to ID
Possible Careers**

**Career Myths
& Realities**

career tech

RCCTA Resource Center for
CareerTech Advancement

CS9015

Essential Skills for Success



The choice of a career is one of the most important **decisions** that you can make. However, career decisions are not easy. They result from careful searching and planning. **Success** in finding a rewarding career will depend on the work **you** put into a career search. By following the steps in career decision-making and using sources of occupational information, you can create a **personal** career **plan**.



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CAREER FOCUS

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Printed in the United
States of America by the
Oklahoma Department
of Career and
Technology Education,
Stillwater, OK
74074-4364

PHOTO CREDITS:
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Identifying Possible

1 Define your future needs and wants.

Examples: Where will you want to live? How much time will you want to devote to your job? How much traveling do you want to do? How much money will you need?

2 Identify possible careers that suit you—careers that match your interests, skills, and personality, as well as your needs and wants.

3 Gather information about each possible career:

- Employment trends/outlook
- Job duties
- Working conditions
- Education and training requirements
- Salary range
- Other information important to you



4 Evaluate your choices.

Example: Compare your results from steps 1 and 3. Are your skills and abilities appropriate for the career? Will the rewards of the career satisfy you?

5 Choose a career path. (You can still revise your plan—or even change your mind!)



6 Design a plan to reach your goal:

Where can you get the needed education and training? How will you afford it?
What courses should you take?
If you're now in school, what part-time jobs could give you useful education and skills for the career you want?
Are internships available?

7 **Be flexible**—have a plan that you can change if you change your mind or if the career field changes.

8 Continue to evaluate your career.

Continue to ask yourself if your chosen career is meeting your needs. If not, then consider a career change. Many people change careers to meet their changing needs or situations.



WEB ACTIVITY

Discover your interests! An interest inventory or profile can help relate your interests to career choices. The one listed below is free and easy: www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip

Sources for Career Information

WEB ACTIVITY

You can find out about hundreds of possible careers using the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* online. Just visit the website and follow the instructions at:

www.bls.gov/oo

- **Career consultants**

- **Counselors**

You can find counselors in many places. For example, look in school guidance offices, in school career planning and placement offices, in community organizations, in private counseling agencies and private practices, and in state employment service offices.

- **Educational institutions**

- High Schools
- Community Colleges
- Colleges / Universities

- **Employers**

- **Online networks and resources**

- **Personal contacts:**

- Parents
- Family members
- Friends and acquaintances
- Neighbors

- **Professional organizations**

- **Public libraries, career centers and guidance offices**

- **Trade associations and magazines**



Career Clusters *and* Pathways

Career clusters are broad career fields. Each cluster includes a number of related occupations that are organized under “career pathways.” Career information is often organized according to career clusters and pathways. You can use them two ways:

1. If you’re thinking about an occupation, you can find career information for that occupation under the appropriate cluster title.
2. If you’re interested in a career field, but aren’t sure about a specific occupation, pick the cluster title to identify possible occupations. Different sources of career information may use different career cluster titles.

Find the top career clusters that interest you according to personal qualities and school subjects. Think about why these qualities would be important.

Career Cluster: Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources

Personal Qualities:

- Practical
- Observant
- Physically active
- Step-by-step thinker
- Coordinated

Favorite School Subjects:

- Agricultural education
- Math
- Geometry
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Language arts

It’s more than farming! Science and technology are fascinating areas that continue to grow through research efforts. New methods and products are continually being developed to make our lives easier and safer. Many of the jobs involved in science and technology are part of agriculture. What exactly is agriculture? It is the production of plants and animals, and related supplies, services, mechanics, products, processing and marketing. Because agriculture continues to expand, the term *agriscience* is often used to describe the application of agricultural principles and new technologies. There are nearly 22 million jobs in agriculture and related fields in the U.S. today. Fewer than 2 million of these are traditional farming jobs. Agriculture in the 21st century is based in science and often calls upon the latest technologies.



Career Cluster: Architecture & Construction

Personal Qualities:

- Curious
- Follows directions
- Detail-oriented
- Can imagine possibilities
- Patient and persistent

Favorite School Subjects:

- Math
- Drafting
- Physical sciences
- Construction trades
- Electrical trades
- Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning
- Technology engineering

WEB ACTIVITY

Careers in green construction:

www.bls.gov/green/construction/

Career Cluster: Arts, A/V Technology & Communications

Personal Qualities:

- Creative and imaginative
- Communicates well
- Curious about technology
- Relates well to feelings and thoughts of others
- Determined

Favorite School Subjects:

- Art/Graphic design
- Music
- Speech and drama
- Literature
- Journalism
- Audiovisual technologies

Career Cluster: Business, Management & Administration

Personal Qualities:

- Organized
- Practical and logical
- Patient
- Tactful
- Responsible

Favorite School Subjects:

- Business and information technology/
computer applications
- Accounting
- Math
- English
- Economics

Career Cluster: Education & Training

Personal Qualities:

- Friendly and helpful
- Decision maker
- Innovative
- Questioning/inquisitive
- Good listener

Favorite School Subjects:

- Language arts
- Social sciences
- Math
- Science
- Psychology





Career Cluster: Finance

Personal Qualities:

- Trustworthy
- Orderly and logical
- Self-confident
- Methodical or efficient

Favorite School Subjects:

- Accounting
- Math
- Economics
- Banking/Financial services
- Business law

Career Cluster: Government & Public Administration

Personal Qualities:

- Communicates well
- Competitive
- Service-oriented
- Organized
- Problem solver

Favorite School Subjects:

- Government
- Language arts
- History
- Math
- Foreign language

Career Cluster: Health Science

Personal Qualities:

- Compassionate and caring
- Follows directions
- Conscientious and careful
- Patient
- Good listener

Favorite School Subjects:

- Health careers education
- Biological sciences
- Chemistry
- Math
- Language arts

Look for “hidden healthcare careers.” Of the many possible careers in health sciences, you might be familiar with only a few of them—such as doctor, nurse, and physical therapist. Other careers are not well known and require little or no contact with patients. For example, investigate careers such as biostatistician, cytotechnologists, surgical technologists, pharmacy technician and medical transcriptionist. Health educators promote wellness and healthy lifestyles.





Career Cluster: Human Services

Personal Qualities:

- Communicates well
- Good listener
- Caring
- Uses logic and intuition
- Non-judgmental

Favorite School Subjects:

- Language arts
- Psychology/Sociology
- Family and consumer sciences education
- Finance
- Foreign language

Family and Consumer Sciences professionals work in the following areas:

- foods and nutrition
- design and consulting
- research
- education
- media
- child development
- human services
- retail merchandising
- consumer affairs
- the Cooperative Extension Service

Career Cluster: Hospitality & Tourism

Personal Qualities:

- Tactful
- Self-motivated
- Works well with others
- Outgoing
- Easygoing/slow to anger

Favorite School Subjects:

- Language arts/Speech
- Foreign language
- Social sciences
- Marketing
- Food services

WEB ACTIVITY

Ready to know more about some of the thousands of possible careers? Go to: www.bls.gov/careeroutlook. You'll find articles about a wide range of career choices and career pathways.



Career Cluster: Information Technology (IT)

Personal Qualities:

- Logical/analytical thinker
- Sees details in the big picture
- Persistent
- Good concentration skills
- Precise and accurate

Favorite School Subjects:

- Math
- Science
- Computer technology/applications
- Technology engineering
- Communications
- Graphic design

Who are IT workers? No single definition exists. However, people in IT careers usually have a computer-related focus. IT careers can be found in almost all parts of the country and in all types of organizations—from retail businesses to manufacturing plants.

WEB ACTIVITY

To learn about the history of the FBI, go to: www.fbi.gov/about-us/history

To learn about “tools of the trade,” take a quiz to test your knowledge and more, go to: www.fbi.gov/fun-games



Career Cluster: Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security

Personal Qualities:

- Adventurous
- Dependable
- Community-minded
- Decisive
- Optimistic

Favorite School Subjects:

- Language arts
- Psychology/Sociology
- Government
- History
- Law enforcement
- First aid/first responder

Career Cluster: Manufacturing

Personal Qualities:

- Practical
- Observant
- Physically active
- Step-by-step thinker
- Coordinated

Favorite School Subjects:

- Math
- Geometry
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Trade and industry
- Technology engineering
- Language arts

Career Cluster: Marketing, Sales & Service

Personal Qualities:

- Enthusiastic
- Competitive
- Creative
- Self-motivated
- Persuasive

Favorite School Subjects:

- Language arts
- Math
- Business education/Marketing
- Economics
- Computer applications



Career Cluster: Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

Personal Qualities:

- Realistic
- Mechanically-inclined
- Coordinated
- Observant
- Planner

Favorite School Subjects:

- Math
- Trade and industry
- Physical sciences
- Economics
- Foreign language

Career Cluster: Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM)

Personal Qualities:

- Detail-oriented
- Inquisitive
- Objective
- Methodical
- Mechanically-inclined

Favorite School Subjects:

- Math
- Science
- Drafting/CAD
- Electronics/Computer networking
- Technology engineering

Like to solve problems? A committee of experts from around the world came up with a list of 14 “grand challenges” for engineering. Maybe you can help to find solutions to these challenges:

Make solar energy economical.

Provide energy from fusion.

Develop carbon sequestration methods.

Manage the nitrogen cycle.

Provide access to clean water.

Restore and improve urban infrastructure.

Advance health informatics.

Engineer better medicines.

Reverse-engineer the brain.

Prevent nuclear terror.

Secure cyberspace.

Enhance virtual reality.

Advance personalized learning.

Engineer the tools of scientific discovery.

To learn more, go to:

www.engineeringchallenges.org

WEB ACTIVITY

To see real-world movies about real STEM careers, go to:

www.thefutureschannel.com

Individual Career Plans

What is an **individual career plan**? An individual career plan (ICP) can work as a roadmap to guide you as you work to reach your career goals. To stay on track, you should create an ICP, then update your plan each year you are in school. You can see sample career plans for each career cluster and career pathway at www.okcareertech.org/educators/career-and-academic-connections/plan-of-study.

What if you change your mind about your career choice? Don't worry! Simply revise your plan of study so you can take the courses you need for your new career choice.

Online

Tools for Career Planning



Preparation

recruiter – a person who evaluates potential employees and makes recommendations to the employer

podcast – a digital file (audio or video) available on the Internet that can be played or downloaded to a personal computer or a mobile device (such as a smart phone)

blog – a website that enables a user to create and update an online journal and allows readers to add comments

A number of online tools can assist you in choosing a career and finding a job:

- **Salary calculators**—These tools provide information on salaries within specific geographic locations and for specific career types. They are useful when moving from one location to another where the cost of living may be drastically different.
- **Career tests**—These tools can help you determine which career is a best fit for your skills and interests.
- **Skills training**—Technology centers, colleges and universities, and community or technical colleges can help you obtain or improve specific job-required skills. Many of them also offer courses online.
- **Advice and resources**—These tools provide information on current employment trends; sample résumés, cover letters, and common interview questions; and even advice on negotiating salary and benefits.
- **Podcasts**—Podcasts provide an opportunity for recruiters to give résumé and job seeking tips. They also enable employers to advertise positions and provide information about their organizations.
- **Blogs**—You can create your own job-search blog, read company blogs, and join career-related blogs.

20 Personal Selling Points

SELLING POINT

1. If you enjoy talking on the telephone...

Stated in interview or on resumé:

"I communicate well and enjoy working with people."

Getting Ready for COLLEGE

Checklist of Things To Do

Before High School

- Build your study skills.
- Start saving money for college.

9th Grade

- Take classes that are challenging to you:
 - English
 - Math and science
 - History
 - Civics and government
 - Geography
 - Foreign language
 - Arts (drama, music, art, etc.)
- Build your study skills.
- Meet the career/guidance counselor at your school.
- Ask people about their jobs and the skills and education needed for the job.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT, if available. (This is the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.)
- Keep saving money for college.

10th Grade

- Take classes that are challenging to you.
- Keep asking people about their jobs and the required skills and education.
- Get involved in school or community activities outside school hours based on your personal or career interests. (These are called extracurricular activities.)
- Meet with the career/guidance counselor about colleges and their application requirements.
 - Take the PSAT/NMSQT.
- Visit colleges that interest you.
- Keep saving money for college.

11th Grade

- Take classes that are challenging to you.
- Continue your extracurricular activities.
- Meet with the career/guidance counselor about colleges and their application requirements.
- Visit colleges that interest you.
- Decide which colleges most interest you. Make a folder for each school:
 - Admission application
 - Deadlines
 - Essay topics (if required for application)
 - Recommendation forms
 - Costs and fees
- Identify sources of recommendations: teachers, employers, career/guidance counselors, church and community leaders, etc.
- Learn about the sources of financial aid and scholarships available.
- Take any admissions tests required by your colleges of interest: SAT I, SAT II, ACT, SAT II Subject Tests, etc.
- If possible, take AP (Advanced Placement) subject tests. (These are tests in certain subjects. Passing scores on these tests can earn you college credit or allow you to skip a required course.)
- Practice writing application essays.
- Keep saving money for college.

12th Grade

- Take classes that are challenging to you.
- Retake any admissions tests required by your colleges of interest, if you choose.
- Get application and financial aid information from colleges of interest (if you haven't already).
- If possible, take AP subject tests.
- Line up all required letters of recommendation and transcripts well before any application deadline.
- Write and proofread any application essays.
- Complete, copy and submit all admissions and financial aid applications.
- Keep saving money for college.

Choosing a College

Choosing a college or university can seem like a scary process. After all, it can be one of the most important decisions you will make. However, you should really worry less and have more fun in making your choice. Once you've answered some simple questions about what you want from a college, the actual decision will be much easier!

Colleges look at certain factors when they review the applications from potential students. These factors include the following:

- Your grades and GPA
- Your class ranking
- Your high school plan of study

Note: A lower grade in a more difficult course often carries more weight than a higher grade in a less difficult course.

- Scores on required tests (SAT, ACT, etc.)
- Your essay or personal statement (usually a required part of your application)
- Recommendations
- Your extracurricular activities

Some colleges may also include an interview as a part of the application process. Others may consider things such as your ability to pay and other factors. Questions you should ask yourself include these:

- What size school do you want to attend?
- Where do you want to live? At home or on campus? In a different city?
- Do you want to meet new people, or see people you already know?
- Do you want a big city school or a small town school?
- Do the school and community offer the activities you want?
- Do you like the campus and the community? Are you interested in the school after looking at the school newspaper?
- How big are the classes?
- What can you afford?
- What will the weather be like?

Paying for College

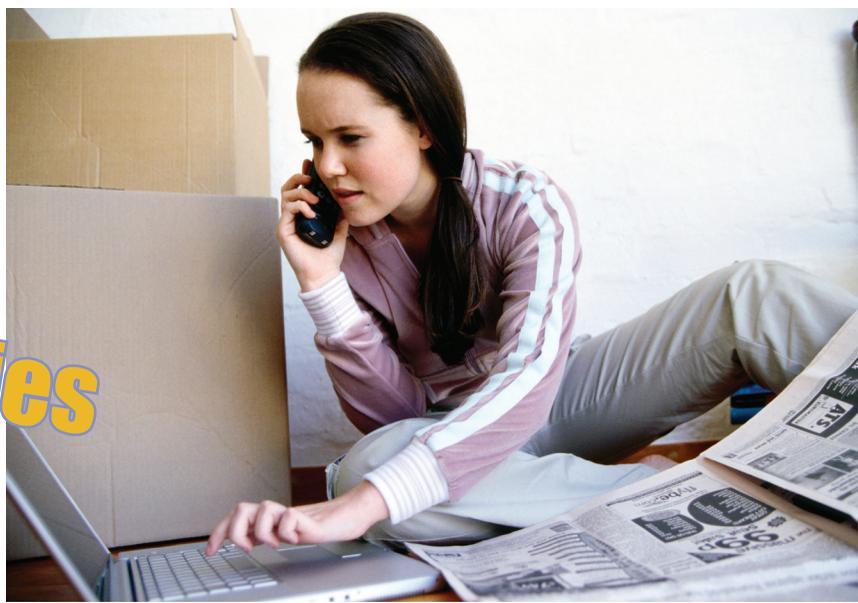
Going to college can be expensive. However, you can apply for financial aid. Financial aid, plus any savings that you've built over the years, can help you to pay for college. Types of financial aid include:

- Grants (money that doesn't have to be repaid)
- Scholarships offered by the college, by organizations, by foundations, and by businesses to individuals who qualify (money that doesn't have to be repaid, but must be applied for and awarded)
- Loans (money that must be repaid with interest after college)
- Work-study programs (money paid for work in specific jobs)

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is required to receive financial aid. You can complete the form for free at www.fafsa.ed.gov.



Finding JOB Opportunities



- Career networking sites
- Social networking sites
 - linkedin.com
 - plaxo.com
 - twitter.com

Note: It is recommended to include a link in your Twitter profile to a professional link, such as linkedin.com.

- facebook.com
- jobfox.com
- Career fairs
- Employment agencies
- School counselors and placement services
- Newspaper classified ads
- Networking
- Internships, volunteering, and community service
- Window signs

SELLING POINT

2. If you like to tell stories or jokes to friends or acquaintances...

"I am confident and relate well to people. I enjoy public speaking."

Managing *your* Digital Dirt



Be careful about the information you provide or post online. This is especially important with social media sites. Some employers will check an applicant's online information as a part of the hiring process. In other words, you need to "manage your digital dirt." Do this by:

- Being choosy about what you post about yourself.
- Searching for your own name to discover what others might be sharing about you.
- Using available privacy controls.
- Knowing the people you share personal information with.
- Removing information and photos that might limit your chances of getting a job.
- Keeping personal information private.

Strategies

for

Networking



Networking is the job of creating links from people you already know to people they know, for a specific purpose—such as finding a job. It also involves making yourself known by meeting with people formally or informally in groups or one-on-one. Networking rarely produces immediate results. It may take many conversations with many people before you find yourself in an interview. It is important to remain positive when talking to potential contacts.

- Join and participate in professional organizations. Almost every career field has related professional organizations. Find organizations that relate to your career interests.
- Practice your social skills. It will give you more confidence in your ability to meet new people and communicate with them.
- Develop your personal self-introduction. Think of a way to introduce yourself to create interest. Practice your introduction until it feels natural and includes the words you want.
- Look for opportunities to network. Are there professional organizations you could join? Is there volunteer work you could do in your community? Think of ways to make yourself more visible to other people.
- Reintroduce yourself to people; don't wait for them to remember you. Remind the person where and when you met before.
- Focus on people when you meet them. Practice your ability to listen for and remember names. Being remembered makes people feel good. It also helps you to widen your network.
- Be courteous with everyone you meet. Anyone you meet could become important in your working life. Being respectful also encourages other people to include you in their networks.
- Keep addresses and titles up to date.
- Keep your network active by staying in touch with people. Use cards, notes, text messages, telephone calls, personal visits, email and other opportunities.
- Follow up promptly on any job referrals that people give you. People like to know that their advice was helpful. Following up with people will encourage them to share more leads with you.

SELLING POINT

3. If you like to solve problems or complete puzzles...

"I am a problem solver and have good reasoning skills."



Skill Builder

Build a Personal Network

A *personal network* is a voluntary, informal communication community. It includes people who share information, abilities, services, support, or other resources with each other. The people in a network make connections with other people. These connections allow members to ask for help or resources—and respond to similar requests from other members. Networking is the process of creating and maintaining a personal network. Networking allows you to use your communication skills to improve your ability to get something done—such as finding a job or a new job. The success of your personal networks depends on your ability to make connections with other people.

- 1. Meet 3 new people.** You can meet them where you go to school, where you work, from a club or community group, from church, or other opportunities that make sense for you.
- 2. Introduce yourself** to each person and carry on a short conversation. After each conversation, record basic information about each contact:
 - The person's name
 - Where the person works
 - The person's title (if any)
 - When and where you met
 - Things you talked about
 - Needs, requests, and interests of the person
 - Other people or organizations discussed
- 3. Make a goal for yourself** to add a certain number of contacts to your network each month. Check your progress, using a calendar to remind yourself.



CAREER Myths & Realities

Chances are, you believe in some myths about careers. Some myths are easy to dismiss, but others can interfere with your ability to develop career goals. To prevent myths from sidetracking your career goals, you need to confirm your beliefs or expose your misconceptions! “Reality tools” such as statistics, advice, and real-world experience can give you the facts. Here are some common myths about careers:

Myth #1—“There is only one ideal job for me.”

Reality: By focusing on finding just one, “perfect” career, you will limit your opportunities. As a result, you might miss a great job that you hadn’t thought about! Most people will have several jobs and career changes during their lifetimes. Every job has positive as well as negative aspects to it. In addition, your job interests may change over time as you gain experience, skill and self-awareness. Keeping your options open puts you in a position of strength.

Myth #2—“My job will use all of my skills and abilities.”

Reality: No single job will use all of your talents. Especially at the start of a career, you should expect to spend time gaining experience and developing skills. Those experiences and skills can help you to get promoted in your job or help you to get your next job.

Myth #3—“My job has to relate to my training or education.”

Reality: Most jobs, even if they require a college degree, often do not specify a college major. Career and technology education may relate more directly to a specific career. However, technical skills can apply to many settings.

Myth #4—“Nobody will hire me because of my lack of experience, poor grades, gaps in my work history, ...”

Reality: How you respond to challenges is a good test of your ability to persevere. If you need experience, you can do related volunteer work, get a job in a related field, work on school projects that relate to your desired career, or do an internship with an employer in your area of interest. If you have low grades, try to highlight other parts of your resume. (Grades usually matter only for a first job after graduation. After that, your personal qualities and job performance matter much more.) If you have a gap in your work history, you could design your resume to focus on skills rather than the sequence of jobs.

Myth #5—“It’s too late to change my career.”

Reality: It is common today for most people to have multiple jobs and even more than one career throughout their working lives.

WEB ACTIVITY

Your TV may not be the best place to learn about careers! Read “As Seen On TV: Reality vs. fantasy in occupational portrayals on the small screen.” Go to: www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2003/home.htm.

Skill Builder

Practice Introductions and Casual Conversation

Making introductions and participating in conversations are important skills. How you make and acknowledge introductions can influence the impression you make on other people. Being able to start a conversation—and keep one going—will also help you in social and workplace settings.

1. Think about some information about yourself—information that you wouldn't mind sharing when introducing yourself!
2. In groups of 2 or 3, practice introducing yourself and another person.
3. In the same group, practice carrying on a casual conversation for 5 minutes. After 5 minutes, think about your answers to these questions:
 - What topics did your group talk about?
 - Did anyone dominate the conversation?
 - Were there any awkward silences?
 - Did the conversation use the full time available?
 - What did you learn about casual conversation?



SELLING POINT

4. If you have hobbies or interests that involve making or doing things by hand...

“My motor skills and hand-eye coordination are good. I follow directions well and can visualize solutions to problems.”

SELLING POINT

5. If you remember the lyrics to even the newest songs...

“My memory is good and I learn things quickly.”

Acing *any* Interview

– what you need to know

An interview is an important event for almost every person. Interviews take place when you apply for a job, but they may also be required when you apply for admission to a school or training program, or even when you apply for a scholarship. For any opportunity that might attract multiple candidates, interviews usually help to narrow the pool. This means that any interview is also your chance to stand out from everyone else in a positive way!

Your behavior before, during and after the interview will strongly influence the impression you make. Here are ways to make a good impression with any interview:

- Dress conservatively.
 - Choose clothing that looks good on you and that is not too casual for the occasion.
 - Wear minimal jewelry and make-up. Avoid perfume and cologne.
 - Do not wear sunglasses.
- Take the necessary documents. For example, bring any required application forms, permissions, recommendations, transcripts, permits, and other information.
- Arrive early. Leave early enough to find the interview location with about 15 minutes to spare.
- Turn off your phone and put it away.
- Introduce yourself to the receptionist or secretary, to the interviewer, and to any other people who will be participating in the interview.
- Shake hands if the opportunity is made to you.
- Let the interviewer begin the interview.
- Keep good posture.
- Maintain eye contact and listen carefully throughout the interview. This shows your sincere interest in the purpose of the interview.
- Be brief, positive, and honest when answering questions. Take notes to help you answer questions, if needed.
- Avoid:
 - Chewing gum, eating candy, and smoking.
 - Using slang or offensive language.
 - Nervous habits, such as playing with your clothes, jangling your keys, and wiggling your foot.
 - Talking in a negative way about other people, jobs, or experiences.
- At the end of the interview, thank the interviewer and anyone else who participated.
- Within a day or two after the interview, send a thank-you card or email to thank the interviewer for interviewing you.



Resumés

that

Stand Out

for the RIGHT reasons

You can find lots of helpful resources about resume styles and designs, and what to include in a resumé. These hints will help to make your resumé a successful “commercial” that advertises you!

- Know your goal and design your resumé to reflect that goal.
- Know your personal selling points and prioritize them.
- Focus on your successes and accomplishments.
- Identify key words and make them stand out. For example, what words does the job description include? What words stand out in the scholarship application?
- Keep your resumé brief (1-2 pages). Put a list of references on a separate sheet and keep the list up to date.
- Do not include a photograph.
- Review and revise your resumé before you send it. Fix any spelling or formatting errors.



SELLING POINT

6. If you do what you say you will do...

“I am reliable and trustworthy.”

SELLING POINT

7. If you show up on time...

“My time management skills are good. I am punctual.”

SELLING POINT

8. If you don't make excuses when things don't go right...

“I am honest and can learn from any situation.”

Why Employers *might* NOT Hire You

General Reasons

- Was not prepared for the interview
- Typos and errors on correspondence (resume, cover letter, thank-you letter)
- Filled out the application incompletely and carelessly
- Resume didn't "sell" candidate
- Talked too little
- Had a less than professional social media presence

Poor Appearance

- Under-dressed, too casual
- Hair was inappropriately styled
- Applied for a job wearing cut-offs or old jeans
- Was unshaven and in need of a bath
- Wore too much makeup or jewelry
- Overdressed for the type of job
- Did not wear proper shirt or shoes

Poor Attitude

- Talked critically about former employer
- Blamed others
- Was sarcastic during interview
- Appeared extremely nervous
- Seemed indifferent to being hired
- Felt the world owed him/her a living
- Displayed a feeling of inferiority
- Not receptive to new ideas or alternatives
- Had poor manners
- Overemphasized question of age
- Was unfriendly

Poor Work History

- Had too many short-term jobs
- Could not back up claimed experience or skills
- Criticized past employers and co-workers
- Left gaps in work history with no explanation
- Changed job without good reasons

Poor Interview

- Asked for an unrealistic wage
- Talked about personal problems
- Talked too much
- Was late for the interview
- Undersold self
- Focused too much on benefits
- Became argumentative
- Seemed not really interested in working
- Did not have a clear understanding of job requirements
- Stressed need for a job, not interest and capacity to do job
- Tried too hard to make an impression
- Stated a willingness or ability to do anything
- Evaded answering questions



AN EDUCATIONAL VIDEO SERIES TO HELP VIEWERS ENTER THE WORKFORCE EQUIPPED FOR SUCCESS

Express Employment Professionals offers a video series to show young adults how to successfully enter the workforce. To sign up for free access to the videos, go to: Expresspros.com/jobgenius

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ion."

SELLING POINT

9. If you practice regularly for a sport, team, or competition...

"I am goal-oriented, motivated and dedicated."

SELLING POINT

10. If you keep your space clean and neat...

"My organizational skills are good."

SELLING POINT

11. If you set some money aside for a rainy day...

"I am a good planner and am goal-oriented. My budgeting skills are good."

SELLING POINT

12. If you are patient with people and look for opportunities to spend time with people...

"I am people-oriented. My interpersonal skills are high."

SELLING POINT

13. If you can come up with lots of ideas for how to do something or what to do...

"I am creative. My critical thinking and problem solving skills are good."

SELLING POINT

14. If you are one of the first people to try a new style, new activity, or new technology...

"I am flexible. I adapt to change well and I am comfortable in new situations."

SELLING POINT

15. If you like to shop for bargains, or look for the best deals online...

"My budgeting skills are good. I am good at making comparisons and choosing the best options."

SELLING POINT

16. If you enjoy playing team sports or working on group projects...

"I work well as a team member. I am good at playing a specific role and can follow directions."

SELLING POINT

17. If you prefer to do things on your own...

"I am self-directed."

SELLING POINT

18. If you keep your cool in tough situations...

"I am good at handling stress."

SELLING POINT

19. If you are competitive...

"I am motivated and enjoy challenges."

SELLING POINT

20. If you don't wait to be told to do something...

"I take initiative."

Getting

BACK ^{to} WORK:

Re-Entry Strategies

For lots of reasons, people may have gaps in their work histories. For example, you may have taken time away from working for a paycheck so you could care for a relative or raise a family. You may have had a hard time finding the right job for your skills, or were laid off from your job for a long time. No matter the reason for your absence, you can use specific strategies to help you return to the workplace.

Change Jobs A Lot?

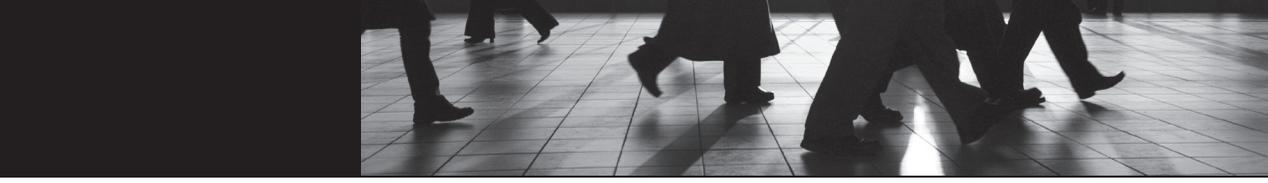
- Know yourself so that you can match a job with your skills and interests.
- Be able to explain gaps in employment or a lot of jobs in a short time period.
- Use a functional resume—one that is organized around skills—rather than a chronological resume, which is organized by year.
- If you use a chronological resume, list employers by the year, not by the month. For example, if you started working for a company in June 2008 and were laid off in February 2011, you could list your dates of employment as 2008-2011.

Need New Skills?

- Look at past jobs and identify the skills you demonstrated in performing those tasks. Those skills could be transferable to a new job.
- Identify skills that relate to your experiences outside the workplace. For example, what skills have you demonstrated while raising children, while volunteering, or while starting a home-based business?
- Update your skills for the jobs you want. For example, the skills in some jobs change more quickly than in other jobs. If you are away from the workplace for even a short time, you may have to upgrade your skills to get back in the mix.

Got a Criminal Record?

- Know whether any conviction prevents you from getting a specific job.
- Put together the essential documents for a job search: your birth certificate, Social Security card, and a valid photo ID.
- Check a copy of your criminal record to make sure it is accurate.
- Be upfront about your criminal record, but avoid unnecessary detail. For example, you could state the nature of the offense, acknowledge making a mistake, and discuss what you've done since then to prepare for the workplace (getting certification in job skills training, taking courses, etc.).



Have Too Little or Too Much Experience?

If you have too little experience:

- Identify the skills involved in your everyday tasks, such as volunteer work or community service. Those skills could transfer to a paid job.
- Look for an entry-level position.

If you have too much experience:

- Be ready to explain why you want a job that may require less experience or offer less pay. Make the case for why you would be a good fit for the job.
- Communicate your commitment to the job for the long term. Employers may be reluctant to hire overqualified applicants because they fear those applicants would soon leave for another, better job opportunity.
- Know how your skills and experience can benefit the employer.
- If you downplay your experience in your resume, make sure to highlight your experience in your cover letter.
- Older applicants—those past their 40s—might consider leaving their high school and college graduation dates off their resumes. However, it is still important to list recent coursework or skill certifications and upgrades.

Been Fired or Laid Off?

- If you were fired, know the reasons why. Knowing why can help you avoid a similar situation later.
- Use alternatives to the word “fired” on job applications and cover letters, such as “job ended” or “involuntary separation.” This encourages the employer to ask you for more details during an actual interview—instead of skipping over your application.
- Be upfront about the reason you were fired. For example, you could state the cause, then discuss what you’ve done since then to prepare for the next job (getting certification in job skills training, taking courses, etc.).
- If you were laid off, start your job search as soon as possible. This will help avoid a long gap in employment that can make it tougher to get the next job.
- Avoid speaking about a former employer in a negative way. A former employer may still be interested in acting as a reference or writing a letter of recommendation.

WEB ACTIVITY

If you have a criminal record, find resources, information, and assistance organized by state by visiting the HIRE Network online at www.hirenetwork.org.

SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT

COMMUNICATION

Yes, it's true—writing skills still matter on the job. Many entry-level job applicants do not have these skills, which is why employers prize them so much. The easiest way to remain in the applicant pool is to use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Once you get the job, don't rely on spell-checking programs as a substitute for your skills. Always check your own writing before sending any message. This includes keeping sentences short, avoiding jargon, and getting to the point quickly. Employers want you to communicate with impact. Use the subject line of your email message to get the reader's attention. Long sentences and paragraphs are especially hard to read using a mobile device, so stay on target with your subject. Write in the active voice using strong verbs. Use more, smaller text blocks than fewer, longer ones. Include your name and contact information at the bottom of your message. Re-read everything before you hit send.

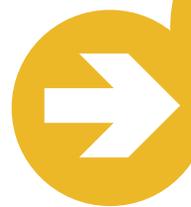
You might be tempted to rely only on email and social media. Sometimes, a phone call or in-person meeting could be the better choice. Make sure that your nonverbal communication does not subtract from your message. Make eye contact, use a pleasant tone of voice, and listen carefully before responding. Never interrupt the other person.

Giving presentations is a common job task in many careers. Learn the basics of presentation design and delivery—and practice often. Know what to leave out of a presentation—too many slides, too much text, and too many transitions.

TEAMWORK/ INTERPERSONAL

Most jobs involve working with other people at least part of the time. The better your interpersonal skills, the more value you have for employers. You may have picked up these skills as a member of a sports team or as an officer or member of a student organization or club. You probably learned how to contribute to the group's success and—more importantly—how to be somebody others want to be around. It shouldn't surprise you to learn that employers are looking for people just like you.

In your personal life, you can choose the people you hang out with. In the workplace, you may have to work with difficult people sometimes. Have you had to bring other people around to your point of view? Have you had to compromise on something small to achieve something larger? Are you somebody who keeps your cool in tough situations? Can you do your best without always being the leader? If this sounds like you, then employers may have a spot for you on their team!



CRITICAL THINKING/ PROBLEM SOLVING

Life is full of challenges and opportunities. Using the right tools in the right way will help you to meet the challenge or seize the opportunity. It's that way in the workplace, too. Employers want to know that you can deal successfully with whatever your way. Besides being skillful with the tools and techniques required in your career choice, the skill that can set you apart for employers is your ability to apply a process to a problem or an opportunity.



ADAPTABILITY

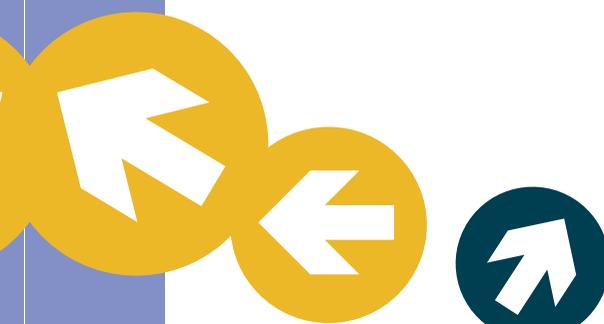
Today's workplace doesn't stand still. It is a dynamic environment with changing technologies, changing customer needs, and changing resources. The only thing constant about today's workplace is the prospect of change. Regardless of your career choice, your employer values people who can thrive in this dynamic environment. You may have to fill new roles, pursue new opportunities, or take new approaches. You've probably developed this skill in countless ways by now. When a plan didn't work out, you revised the plan. When the picture on the box didn't quite look like the parts inside the box, you figured out how to work with what you had. When a team member was absent, you filled in. Dealing effectively with change, whether it is planned or unplanned, is a skill vital to any employer.

PROFESSIONALISM/ INTEGRITY/RELIABILITY

Succeeding on the job means showing up to do the work every day and following the rules. It means doing what you say you'll do. Not surprisingly, employers say they want people who believe and act this way. They view your professionalism as a sign of your maturity and self-confidence. Employers want to know that you will represent their company or organization in a positive way with customers and with the public. Employers spend a lot of time managing their image and their brand—do you do the same with your personal brand?

They say that a good way to become a leader is to first be a good follower. Employers want people who honor their commitments, are loyal to other people and to the employer, avoid negative talk, keep the trust that others place in you, respond to requests and messages promptly, discuss concerns directly and honestly, and respect the roles and responsibilities of others in work processes.

Professionalism is all about the impression you make on others. Employers are looking for people who not only make a good first impression, but a good lasting impression as well.



DECISION MAKING

Most workplaces give new hires some guidance about how to do the work. Beyond this guidance, employers expect people to make good decisions on their own and in teams. Succeeding on the job means planning and organizing your work, identifying and working through (not around) obstacles, identifying alternatives and making choices, solving problems, and being creative and flexible in response to the changing demands of a job. You can argue that good decision-making skills are really what employers are hiring in the first place. The question is, do those skills have your name on them?



SELF-MANAGEMENT/ SELF-DIRECTION

Today's workplace often relies upon fewer people handling more responsibilities. Succeeding on the job means accepting more responsibilities when they are offered, learning more about your job, developing new skills, seeing things that need to be done and doing them without being asked, working to improve your performance, and identifying opportunities for yourself and your employer. Proof of your ability to be self-directed on the job lies in your plans for achieving and growing in the career you want. If you're planning a career change, can you show how you've prepared for that change?

ATTITUDE/ENTHUSIASM

Passion may be hard to describe, but it is easy to see. Do you really enjoy the opportunity to work in your chosen career field? Your employer hopes so, because your attitude about and enthusiasm for the work will not only enrich your life, it will also make a difference to your customers. Succeeding on the job means taking the concerns of other people seriously and responding to them promptly, being courteous and polite at all times, maintaining self-control, looking people in the eye, saying "please" and "thank you" often, and anticipating the needs of others.

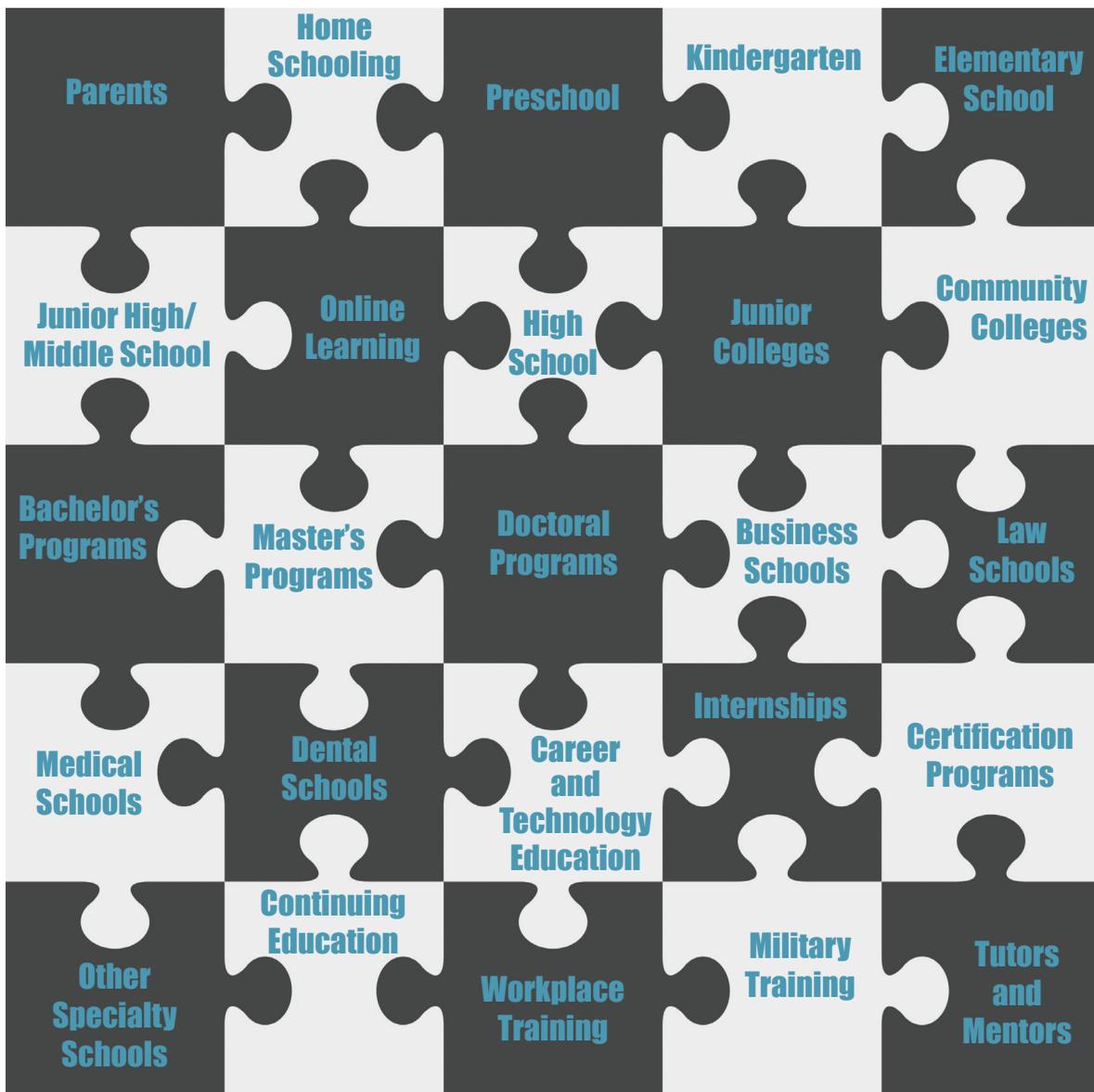
Career and Academic Connections, a division of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, assembled a number of useful websites and free resources to download! You can access these resources at: www.okcareer.tech/cacfocus.



Putting Together

the Education PUZZLE

You have a variety of options for lifetime learning- from preschool to adult education and advanced certifications.



KNOW Where You're GOING And How to Get There!



- Identifying possible careers
- Creating individual career plans
- Defining your personal selling points
- Finding out about job opportunities
- Preparing for interviews
- Getting back to work

Open this guide to get started today!

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RCCTA Resource Center for
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<https://www.okcareertech.org/educators/resource-center>

Supporting Teaching, Advising and Planning